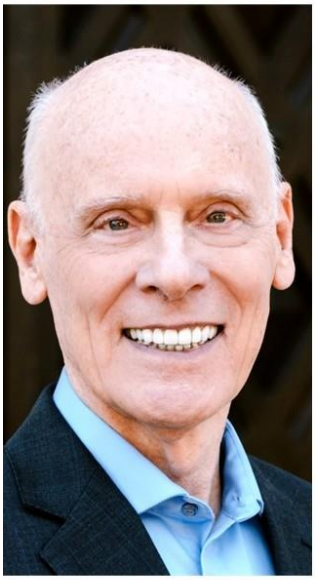

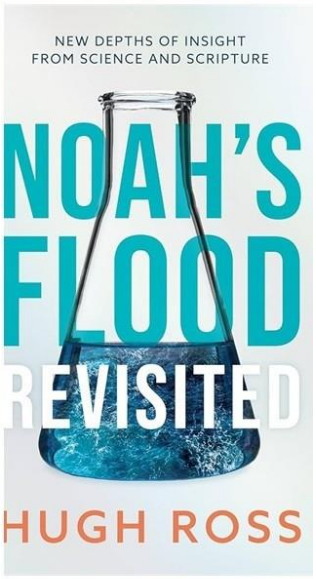

Noah's Flood Revisited: Introducing a World-Famous Astrophysicist's Take on the Genesis Deluge

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Canadian astrophysicist Hugh Ross has for decades defended creationism while adhering to the geologic timescale of mainstream science, earning acclaim in both academic and inter-denominational theological circles. But it took until October 2025, when at age 80, Ross has addressed the most controversial yet fascinating and multi-faceted aspect of the Genesis account: Noah's Flood.

On Oct. 7, Ross is releasing his book ***Noah's Flood Revisited: New Depths of Insight from Science and Scripture***, a life work more than a decade in the making that synthesizes recent scientific, historical and anthropological research and a commitment to Biblical inerrancy to provide an in-depth, scholarly yet accessible primer on this topic for the 21st century.

A day before the book was released, I had the privilege of organizing and leading the first **interview** Ross has granted for his new release, working alongside Kelly Clemensen and Jay Ward, apologetics teachers at my home church, for an hour-long discussion on the Genesis flood saga and its significance. The interview drew both shocked skepticism (how could I land a first interview with someone so prominent?) and enthusiasm across the

Christian world (Roman Catholics, Amish, Pentecostals and mainstream Protestants have all prayed over my effort).

In reading an advance copy of Ross' book and discussing the thesis at length in the interview, I gained a new appreciation for a flood model that seems to harmonize both Scripture and science, yet has been neglected by many scholars in recent centuries. The question may seem like splitting hairs, but is a gamechanger: was Noah's Flood global or worldwide?

What is the World?

Today, virtually all people define the world as the entirety of Planet Earth. But this understanding and reality is relatively recent. A few millennia ago, humanity hadn't reached many far-flung islands such as Hawaii or New Zealand. All major civilizations 3,000 years ago were concentrated in Asia, North Africa and southern Europe. And at one time, according to both the Bible (Genesis 11:1) and anthropology, civilization was concentrated in a single region.

Ross maintains the world of Noah's Day was probably not the entire globe, simply because humanity had not yet ventured far beyond the bounds of the Middle East and East Africa.

Thus, a devastating watery catastrophe could have been regional, yet simultaneously have impacted everyone alive at that time, and thus enter the historical lexicon of virtually all human cultures.

Such a model accounts for the strong evidences for Noah's Flood in anthropology but the lack of scientific support for flood geology, the view common in young earth creationist circles that most of the world's landforms are due to the Deluge.

The Evidence from Global Folklore

One of the greatest evidences for Noah's Flood, Ross maintains, is the ubiquity of flood legends, accounts in folklore that seem to parallel the Biblical account.

"Ancient universal flood legends are found among ethnic people groups of Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, Polynesia, and South America. Among only a few groups in Africa and Asia have no such stories yet been uncovered," writes Ross. "What all the ancient flood legends and myths share in common with each other and with the Genesis account is that long ago in human history a single catastrophic flood wiped out all people other than a special few. In nearly all the stories, the only people to survive the flood are those closely related to each other."

These flood legends bear less similarities with the Biblical account the further one travels from Mesopotamia. This makes sense, Ross argues, because the further away from the initial event one travels, the more embellishment and loss of detail would occur.

Challenges of Flood Theology

Arguably no Biblical story is as ridiculed in academic circles as Noah's Flood, mostly because of the strong insistence of young earth creationists on a global inundation. But Ross notes that among lay people, a bigger challenge is flood theology – why would the merciful God of Scripture destroy humanity through such a disaster?

"What seems a glaring inconsistency with respect to God's goodness and love deserves attention and must be addressed before attempting to unravel any other troubling aspects of Genesis 6-11," contends Ross. "How is the biblical God's act of divine judgment any different from the Mesopotamian gods' anger? To deal with this all-important question requires an in-depth examination of God's attributes alongside a realistic consideration of context: first, the level of moral degradation to which those destroyed in Noah's flood had fallen and, second, the impact of this degradation on their animals and environment."

In an era before the restraints of human government, Judeo-Christian theologians down through the centuries have agreed that the pre-Flood world was one of normalized murder, rape and pillage. These activities impacted the domesticated animals and it was primarily the *nephesh* (Hebrew word for "soulish") animals that can relate to humans that needed rescue through Noah's Ark.

This view holds that Noah's Flood represented a fresh start for humanity, making possible the advanced and diverse civilizations that we know today.

OVERVIEW OF NOAH'S FLOOD MODELS

MODEL	TIMEFRAME	SCOPE	PROPONENTS
Young Earth Model	Around 5,000 years ago	Global	Henry Morris, Ken Ham
Hugh Ross Model	Between 45,000 and 120,000 years ago	Regional, but impacted all humans at that time	Hugh Ross, many early Christian writers
Black Sea Model	About 7,000 years ago	Regional and may not have impacted all humanity, but large enough to enter human folklore	Robert Ballard (discoverer of the *Titanic*) wreck
Allegorical	Never literally occurred	Perhaps based on local floods	Many theistic evolutions and atheists/agnostics

The Hugh Ross Flood Model

Ross' flood model is that Noah's Flood occurred between 45,000 and 120,000 years ago. It is seen as an Ice Age catastrophe, occurring during one of the rapid ice melt events in which massive waters would be unleashed over large areas.

This model is based on a number of lines of evidence, including the legends of lost civilizations (think Atlantis) common in global mythology, the emergence of linguistic diversity that accounting to Genesis 11 post-dated the Deluge, genetic and historical data on humanity's spread to the remote corners of Planet Earth, and post-Flood migration routes.

It is common knowledge that many peoples spread around the world through now non-existent land bridges that were in existence in the Ice Age (think the Native American crossing from Siberia to Alaska), and these migrations must have occurred after the post-Flood dispersion, according to Ross.

The fabled Garden of Eden likely existed underneath what is now the Persian Gulf, Ross maintains, an idyllic civilization consumed by water as the Ice Age retreated.

A Novel Option for Understanding Genesis…Or Maybe an Old View Resurrected

Much as the culture wars rage in society, the religious world is sharply divided between fundamentalism and liberalism. The former usually interpret the first 11 chapters of Genesis as an account of earth history entirely fulfilled in less than 10,000 years, while the latter give little credence to any historical validity in the early Genesis sagas, chalking it all up to allegory or fable.

Ross sees serious concerns with treating Genesis as myth. "Nowhere in the Genesis 6-9 text do clues exist implying only a symbolic or allegorical interpretation is intended," he writes. "Elsewhere in the Bible, authors explicitly clarify when their writing is *not* to be understood literally…The [Genesis] story is presented as historical narrative in the same sense as the stories in Genesis 12-50, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. Theologians and other scholars and lay readers who reject a historical reading of Genesis 6-9 do so because such a reading *appears* to counter what's real or even possible."

It might come as a surprise to many that Noah's Flood isn't an isolated story only to be found in four chapters in the opening section of Scripture. The Psalmist, the writer of Proverbs, the Old Testament prophets, Jesus Christ Himself, and the Apostles all reference the Deluge. Thus, understanding how this prehistoric disaster fits into the Biblical metanarrative is paramount.

Seeking insights from the Christian past, Ross examines the views of Early Church Fathers such as St. Irenaeus and St. Augustine, as well as Medieval and early modern scholars such as St. Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther and John Calvin. This literature review reveals a near-unanimous commonality: Noah's Flood is viewed as *both* historical (meaning the event actually occurred in the human past) *and* allegorical (meaning it conveys spiritual truths, such as being an example of baptism, salvation in Christ and Christ's still-future Second Advent). The Flood is believed to have wiped out all of humanity, but not necessarily impacted the entire planet.

"While Christian scholars prior to the Scientific Revolution held differing views on Noah's flood, the range of disagreement was far narrower than it is today," observes Ross. "Perhaps even more significantly, the demeanor they showed in discussing the topic with one another appear far more charitable than we see in such discussions today."

The mountains of Ararat. Somewhere here (though not necessarily at the summit) is where Noah's Ark landed after the deluge, according to the Genesis account. Photo by Wikimedia Commons

The Critical Review

The experience of being the first to interview Hugh Ross on his new book was thrilling yet humbling. As a homeschooled child, Ross' writings were my science textbooks and I gave out a generous donation of his titles on science and faith at my mother's funeral a decade ago. Thus, the opportunity to help Ross market his life work is deeply personal.

Attempting a more critical analysis, I'd suggest that Ross' book makes several significant contributions to science and theology:

· **It is the First Work by a World-Renowned Scientist to Endorse a Literal Genesis Flood Account.** Young earth writings such as Henry Morris' *The Genesis Record* or the materials of Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis may be popular in evangelical circles, but they are clearly written from a Christian, rather than scientific, perspective. On the other hand,

the Black Sea flood hypothesis of *Noah's Flood: The New Scientific Discoveries About the Event That Changed History* is all about science and history but does not attempt to endorse Christian theology. Ross brings together both at a scholarly level yet understandable to the layman.

· **It Helps Us Understand the Evolving Scope of the World.** We in modern times tend to forget how recently humanity has experienced globalization. Ross' delineation between global and worldwide sheds new light on eschatology (reminding us that the absence of many modern nations is because of their non-existence just a few centuries ago) and gives us a renewed appreciation for our shared human heritage that at one time was united in place and shared identity.

· **It Treats Scripture as a Unified Whole.** Ross is heavily influenced by Reformed theology, which emphasizes an overarching narrative to Scripture, as opposed to the rather disjointed readings common in both evangelicalism and liberalism. "It is not enough to interpret the Bible literally, we must do so both literally and consistently," is the interpretative ethos of Ross. When applied to Noah's Flood, the theology, historicity and application is better understood compared with both evangelical commentators and liberal critiques that fail to engage in this type of integration.

· **It Connects the Ice Age to the Deluge.** The Ice Age is a well-attested event in secular primordial history. By recognizing the possible connection with Noah's Flood, it provides a mechanism for how the Deluge might have occurred in a way that would be testable scientifically.

· **It Builds Bridges Through the Emphasis on Flood Legends.** Recognizing that many historically non-Christian cultures have flood legends that corroborate, rather than erode, the Biblical account helps us to build bridges of understanding and outreach with those of differing ethnic and religious backgrounds. While Noah's Flood may be a battleground in today's secularized Western culture, it can be a unifying point in traditional societies.

On the negative side, I have concerns with the timeframes that Ross employs. Though I'm entirely open to the vast billions of years of geologic time for the age of the earth, I have reservations with more than 10,000 years of human history for a number of reasons. The destructiveness of human wars, the fact that technological advances have happened only recently, the rapid recent growth in population, and the strong Jewish tradition of 6,000 years (give or take a few centuries) since human creation mean that we shouldn't too rapidly discard the timeframe of young earth creationists. There are reasons why a plurality of Christian and Jewish authors have tended toward these recent dates. They are suggested in the Biblical genealogies and they make sense with some of the anthropological and

cultural evidence (while of course raising scientific concerns with the knowledge we have gained in recent centuries). Plus, if the story of Noah's Flood is literally true as Ross asserts, it seems more likely that the details would have been passed down over a shorter time horizon than, say, 50,000 years.

The Main Thing

I can't improve on Hugh Ross' concluding paragraphs in *Noah's Flood Revisited* for a summation of why this topic matters.

"Those of us who have access to the Scriptures have a responsibility to carefully consider whether the biblical account of Noah's flood is historically defensible or not. If we can show it to be true, then we remove a major challenge to biblical inerrancy and a stumbling block to faith. The door will be opened for Bible readers to affirm that everything written in the Bible's 66 books on all the topics they address has been supernaturally inspired by God to convey truth," writes Ross.

"Confidence that the Bible is, indeed, the true and trustworthy Word of God provides powerful motivation to consider what its stories, including the account of Noah's flood, reveal about the heart of God. Just as God reached out with precise timing and a perfect plan to rescue Noah and his family from a deadly flood, so God reaches out with precise timing and a perfect plan to rescue from spiritual death all who put their trust in Him through Jesus Christ – God's Son, our Creator and Redeemer."